



ASMFC

# FISHERIES *focus*

Volume 14, Issue 8  
September 2005

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission • 1444 Eye Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C.

*Working towards healthy, self-sustaining populations for all Atlantic coast fish species or successful restoration well in progress by the year 2015*

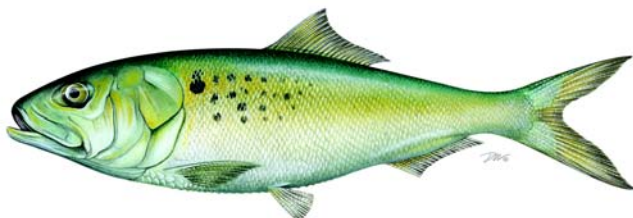
## **Atlantic Menhaden Addendum II Caps Chesapeake Bay Reduction Fishery at 5-Year Average & Initiates Research Program to Assess the Status of Menhaden in the Bay**

The Commission's Atlantic Menhaden Management Board approved Addendum II to Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Menhaden. The Addendum establishes a five-year annual cap on reduction fishery landings in Chesapeake Bay based on the mean landings over the last five years. The cap will be implemented beginning in 2006. Overharvest in any given year would be deducted from the next year's quota. Any amount of under-harvest would not be transferred to the next year.

This action was taken in response to concern regarding the possibility of localized depletion of menhaden in the Bay. The 2003 peer-reviewed stock assessment indicates that menhaden are not overfished and overfishing is not occurring on a coastwide basis, however, its bay-wide status is unknown. Due to this uncertainty, the Management Board has established a precautionary cap to limit the expansion of menhaden reduction landings from Chesapeake Bay.

At the same time, the Addendum initiates a research program to determine the status of menhaden in the Bay and assess whether localized depletion is occurring. It identifies the following research priorities: (1) determine menhaden abundance in the Chesapeake Bay; (2) determine estimates of menhaden removal by predators; (3) evaluate the rate of exchange of menhaden between the Bay and coastal systems; and (4) conduct larval studies to determine recruitment to the Bay. In support of these activities, the Commission and the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office have begun to move forward on a cooperative research program for Atlantic menhaden.

The Commission conducted 12 public hearings and provided more than 60 days for public comment on the Addendum. Copies of Addendum II will be available in September and can be obtained via the Commission's website at [www.asmfmc.org](http://www.asmfmc.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. For more information, please contact Nancy Wallace, Atlantic Menhaden Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at (202)289-6400 or [nwallace@asmfc.org](mailto:nwallace@asmfc.org).



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**T**he Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species. The fifteen member states of the Commission are: Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

*Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*

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## Upcoming Meetings

**9/11 - 15:**

American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting, Anchorage, Alaska.

**9/11 - 17:**

International Association Fish & Wildlife Agencies, Nashville, Tennessee.

**9/13:**

ASMFC Tautog Technical Committee, Radisson Airport Hotel Providence, 2081 Post Road, Warwick, Rhode Island.

**9/13 - 15:**

ACCSP Recreational Technical Committee, Annapolis, Maryland.

**9/13 - 15:**

New England Fishery Management Council, Providence Biltmore, Providence, Rhode Island.

**9/19 - 23:**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Town & Country, 2008 Savannah Highway, Charleston, South Carolina; 800-334-6660.

**9/26 - 30:**

ASMFC Technical Committee Meeting Week, Radisson Old Town Alexandria, 901 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, Virginia (see schedule on page 12).

**9/29:**

ASMFC American Lobster Advisory Panel, Radisson Hotel Airport Providence, 2081 Post Road, Warwick, Rhode Island.

**10/4 - 6:**

Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Southampton Inn, 91 Hill Street, Southampton, New York.

**10/18 - 20:**

ACCSP Operations Committee, location to be determined.

**10/31 - 11/3:**

ASMFC 64th Annual Meeting, Marriott Seaview Resort & Spa, 401 South New York Road, Galloway, New Jersey.

**11/15 - 17:**

New England Fishery Management Council, Sheraton 4 Points, Hyannis, Massachusetts.

**12/5 - 9:**

South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, Courtyard Marriott, 100 Charlotte Avenue, Carolina Beach, North Carolina; 800-458-3606.

Effective fisheries management requires sound scientific advice. We count on the scientists to estimate stock abundance, determine trends in fishery use and stock status, and provide advice on what actions managers need to take to restore or sustain healthy stocks. To their credit, there are certain groups who have adopted the principle of living with the science. They channel their energy into crafting fishing strategies that stay within the bounds set by science.

There are others who seem to judge the credibility of the scientific advice by the management actions that follow, especially if quotas are reduced, size limits increased or seasons shortened. Challenging scientific advice in the face of restrictions risks creating the appearance that the nature of the news (low quotas) is the real issue rather than the process that produced the advice. While a vigorous debate about the scientific advice is healthy, it should be conducted with a full understanding of the work that went into producing it.

The American lobster stock assessment is a good example of the significant efforts being made to craft sound scientific advice for the Commission. Scientists from the States of Maine to New Jersey, NOAA Fisheries and several universities have been working on this project for two years, under the oversight of our Lobster Technical Committee. One of their major endeavors has been to generate new mathematical models to describe the relationships between lobster growth, egg production, survey abundance and harvest. The resultant models evolved through a process of examination and debate between the modelers and Technical Committee scientists.

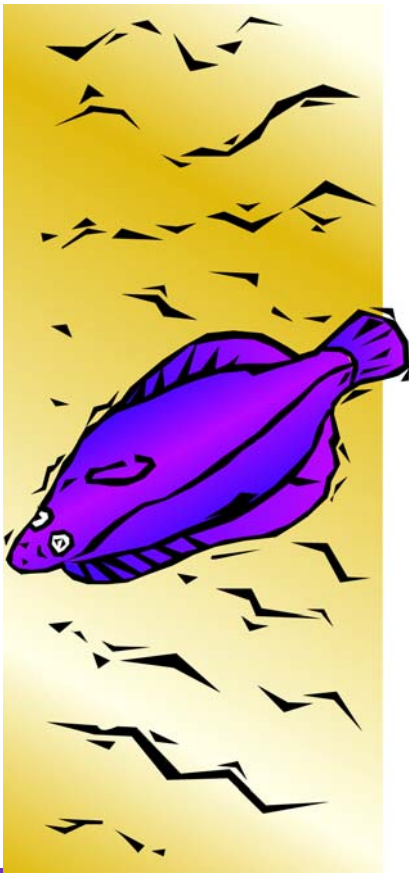
Last summer, the models were submitted for critical review to an independent peer review panel contracted by the Commission. Three of the participating scientists were from the West Coast and the fourth was from Florida. All had extensive experience in assessing fisheries stocks and were recognized experts in fisheries population dynamics. Two have coauthored textbooks on fisheries population modeling. This panel provided advice on which model to use for the lobster stock assessment and made recommendations for improvements. Its report entitled "American Lobster Stock Assessment Model Technical Review: Terms of Reference & Panel Report" (ASMFC Special Report No. 82) is available on our website.

Once modifications to the model were made, fisheries-dependent (state and federal landing information) and -independent data (state and federal trawl survey information, tagging studies) were loaded into the model. Scientists conducted numerous model runs to check for trends and consistencies, as well as errors in the data.

The model results were then used by the scientists to estimate the population characteristics of lobsters, including things like distribution and fishing mortality. Their work was summarized in a stock assessment report. Again, the report evolved through a process of examination and debate between the Stock Assessment Subcommittee and Technical Committee scientists.

In August, the stock assessment report was submitted for peer review. This time six scientists participated. Three of the model reviewers from the 2004 model review returned. The other three were from the West Coast and included the other coauthor of the fisheries population textbook as well as a prominent state fishery crustacean biologist. The panel's job was to understand what the lobster scientists had done, and then evaluate whether the data they used was adequate and whether they had applied the model correctly. The panel met in Boston with the scientists who worked on the stock assessment. The assessment team explained its work and answered questions from the panel, which had previously read the stock assessment report. This exchange was open to the public and attended by other scientists, as well as state officials and representatives from the lobster industry. It would be safe to say that the high caliber of the peer review panel scientists was obvious to all who were in the room.

The peer review panel is working on its report now, so I don't yet know what the panel will say about the stock assessment. What I do know is that a tremendous amount of effort has been put forth by our lobster scientists to assess the population. Their efforts have been rigorously reviewed by some of the most objective and knowledgeable fisheries scientists in the country. We have taken these steps to ensure the advice we receive is credible, allowing the formulation of meaningful and effective management actions to ensure healthy and sustainable fisheries. Hopefully, that is something we can all agree on.



**Summer Flounder**  
*Paralichthys dentatus*

**Common Names:** fluke, flounder

**Family:** Paralichthyidae

**Largest Recorded:** 4' & 30 lbs

**Oldest Recorded:** 20 years

**Interesting Fish Facts:**  
 \* Left-eyed flatfish which has both eyes on the left side of its body when viewed from above with the top fin facing up.  
 \* Called chameleons of the sea because of their ability to change color to match the bottom on which they are found.

**Age at Maturity:** 50% mature by age 1 (9.8") for males and 1.5 (11") for females

**Stock Status:** Not overfished; overfishing is occurring

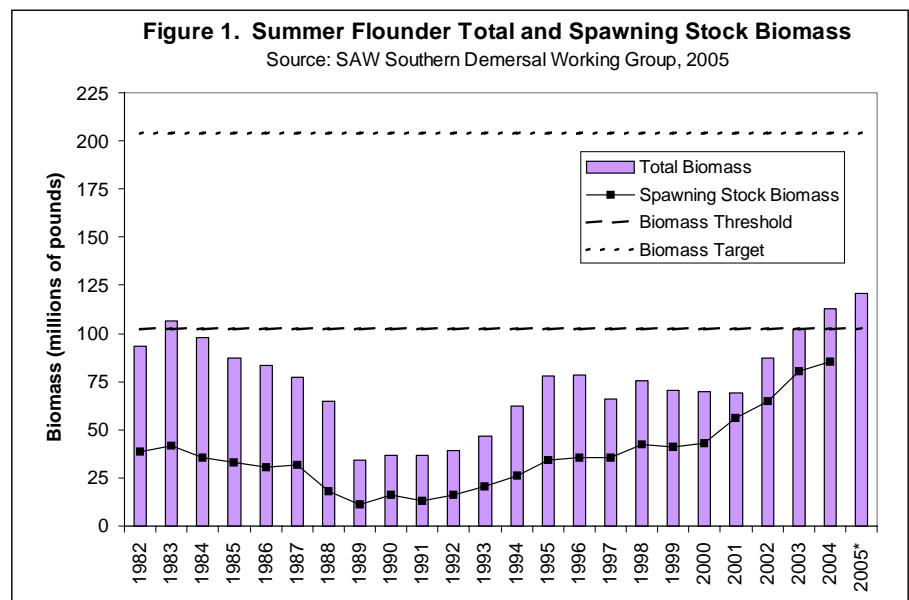
**Current FMP Rebuilding Goal:** Scheduled to be rebuilt by 2010

## Species Profile: Summer Flounder

### The Future Looks Bright -- Joint Management Efforts Bring Steady Results

#### Introduction

Summer flounder, *Paralichthys dentatus*, is one of the most sought after commercial and recreational fish along the Atlantic coast. It is also among a growing number of species benefiting from successful fisheries management. After reaching record low biomass levels throughout the early 1990s, current biomass estimates are once again approaching the record highs of the mid-1980s (see Figure 1). From 1983 to 1989, spawning stock biomass declined 72 percent from 41.4 million pounds to 11.5 million pounds. However, improved recruitment and decreased fishing mortality has resulted in an increased spawning stock biomass of 85.1 million pounds in 2004 -- the highest value in the time series. This rebuilding is a direct result of the long-standing commitment of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission), the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) and commercial and recreational fishermen to restore this important species.



\* 2005 data are based on model projections.

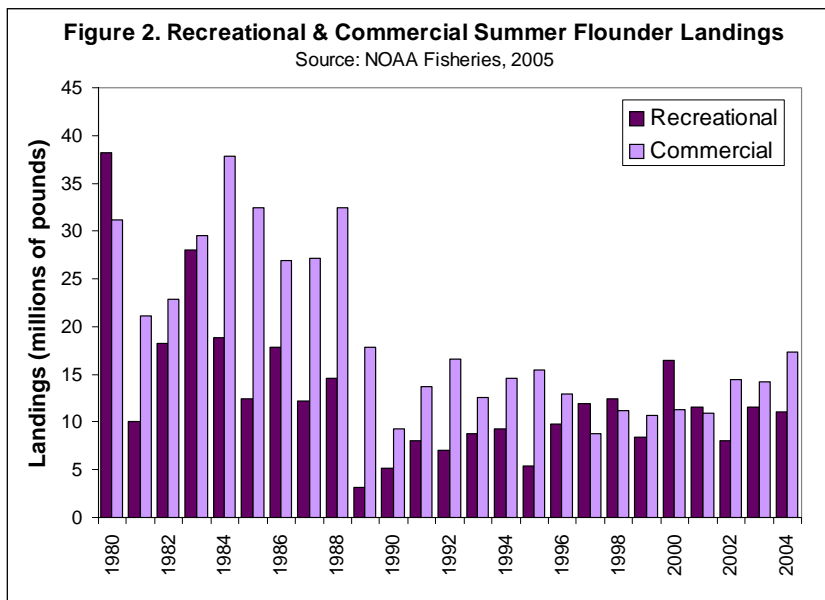
#### Life History

Summer flounder is found in inshore and offshore waters from Nova Scotia, Canada to the east coast of Florida. In the U.S., they are most abundant in the Mid-Atlantic region from Cape Cod, Massachusetts to Cape Fear, North Carolina. Summer flounder normally inhabit coastal and estuarine waters in summer and move offshore to deeper waters (depths of 120 to 600 feet) in the fall and winter. Summer flounder usually begin to spawn at age two or three, at lengths of about 10 inches. Spawning occurs in the fall while the fish are moving offshore. Larvae migrate to inshore coastal and estuarine areas from October to May. The larvae, or fry, move to bottom waters upon reaching the coast and spend their first year in bays and other inshore areas. At the end of their first year, some juveniles join the adult offshore migration. Migratory patterns of summer flounder vary with latitude but generally summer flounder migrate south and offshore in the fall and inshore and to the north in the spring. Summer flounder in the northern portion of the geographic range spawn and move offshore earlier than summer flounder in the southern part of the range.

## Commercial & Recreational Fisheries

Summer flounder are a highly prized food fish sought by both recreational and commercial fishermen from Massachusetts to North Carolina. Two major commercial trawl fisheries exist — a winter offshore and a summer inshore. Summer flounder are also taken by pound nets and gillnets in estuarine waters.

Throughout the 1980s, commercial landings ranged from 21 to 38 million pounds. By 1990, landings reached a low of nine million pounds and have since fluctuated between nine and 17 million pounds. In 1993, the coastwide quota was implemented for the first time, setting a commercial landings limit of 12.35 million pounds. Commercial quotas have since ranged from 11.11 to 16.92 million pounds. 2004 commercial landings were estimated at 17.3 million pounds (see Figure 2).



Summer flounder are one of the most popular recreational fish on the Atlantic coast. From 1980 through 2004, recreational landings have varied widely from a high of 38 million pounds in 1980 to a low of three million pounds in 1989. From 1996 to 2004, landings have ranged from 10 to 17 million pounds. 2004 recreational landings were estimated at 10.8 million pounds. Combined commercial and recreational landings were 28 million pounds in 2004.

## Stock Status

In June 2005, the Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Review Committee (SARC) found that while the summer flounder stock is recovering and is not overfished, overfishing is still occurring relative to the current definitions. While fishing mortality has declined from 1.32 (an exploitation rate of 68%) in 1994 to 0.40 (30% exploitation rate) in 2004, it is still above the current overfishing definition of 0.276. Total stock biomass has increased substantially since 1989 and, by January 2005, was estimated to be 121 million pounds, ex-

ceeding the biomass threshold of 102 million pounds. Spawning stock biomass has also significantly increased, with the 2004 estimate at 85.1 million pounds, the highest value in the time series. While abundance at age for most age classes has increased over the last ten years, 2003 and 2004 estimates indicate that recruitment has been below average, with some state and federal surveys suggesting a decrease in summer flounder abundance.

## Atlantic Coastal Management Considerations

The Commission approved the first Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Summer Flounder in 1982, followed by a similar FMP approved by the Council in 1988. Since then, both agencies have made significant revisions to the plan, increasing the protection of juvenile fish and ensuring the maintenance of an adequate spawning population. This increased protection was achieved through the implementation of larger minimum size limits across all sectors, increased mesh sizes, and decreased recreational possession limits. Cumulatively, these changes have contributed to rebuilding the resource. This is not to say that challenges in managing this species do not still exist. Recreational and commercial allocation issues persist. While states have adopted management measures to stay within their commercial and recreational quotas, overages continue to occur, particularly in the recreational sector. Additionally, managers and scientists continually strive to improve the data and science used to manage this species.

## Allocation

Using baseline data from 1980 to 1989, the current plan allocates the summer flounder quota on a 60/40 percent basis to commercial and recreational fisheries, respectively. This period was chosen because the data represent the most complete and accurate landings information available for both commercial and recreational fisheries prior to the implementation of coastwide management measures. Some within the recreational fishing community have questioned the use of these years, suggesting that the majority of historic landings (pre-1980) were caught by recreational anglers and that using recreational catch data collected prior to the creation of the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey would produce a higher recreational allocation. The Commission's Summer Flounder Technical Committee discussed the possibility of using pre-1980 catch data, but determined that the data was not available for summer flounder as an individual species (i.e., all summer flounder data were included in a general flounder category). The Technical Committee concluded that the use of pre-1980 data for quota allocation was inappropriate. Both the Commission and Council supported this

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## Species Profile: Summer Flounder (continued from page 5)

conclusion. The coastwide commercial and recreational average landings split from 1980 to 2004 is 59.8 percent commercial landings and 40.2 percent recreational landings.

### Biological Reference Points

Over the last several years, the Commission and Council have expressed concern regarding the plan's current biological reference points (i.e., fishing mortality targets and thresholds) and whether they are the most appropriate benchmarks to measure the success of the management program. The Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop Southern Demersal Working Group (SAW Working Group), the scientific body responsible for the summer flounder assessment, has continued to monitor the biological characteristics of the stock in accordance with the recommendations of the SARC and the Council's Science and Statistical Committee. In 2005, the SAW Working Group conducted analyses to evaluate the appropriateness of the current reference points and concluded that changes to the reference points were warranted. The analysis updates the

biological reference points for summer flounder based on the 2005 assessment update using fishery data through 2004 and research survey data through 2004/2005. Updated biological reference points include: a fishing mortality rate of 0.276, a maximum sustainable yield of 42 million pounds, a biomass target of 204.2 million pounds, and a biomass threshold of 102.1 million pounds.

Based on concern regarding low recruitment over the last two years and continued overfishing, the Council recently recommended a total allowable landings (TAL) limit of 26 million pounds to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The recommended TAL is 4.3 million pounds lower than the 2005 TAL. If NMFS adopts the TAL recommended by the Council, NMFS would likely adopt the Council-recommended constant harvest strategy that would set the TAL at 26 million pounds for the



next three years. The constant harvest strategy is intended to mitigate significant social and economic impacts to commercial and recreational fisheries, as well as achieve the revised rebuilding stock biomass target of 204 million pounds by 2010. The Commission's Board expressed concern regarding the acceptability of the Council's action and decided to withhold its recommendation until its Annual Meeting in late October/early November. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or [tkerns@asmfc.org](mailto:tkerns@asmfc.org).

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## Weakfish Draft Addendum I Approved for Public Review & Comment: Addendum to Address Stock Decline

In response to a significant decline in stock abundance, the Commission's Weakfish Management Board has approved sending forward Draft Addendum I to Amendment 4 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Weakfish for public review and comment. Concern over declining commercial and recreational catches requires the Board to consider reductions in recreational bag limits, commercial and recreational seasons, and bycatch allowances.

The Draft Addendum also addresses a major challenge in assessing the weak-

fish population, namely significant gaps in biological data such as age and length. It proposes new required levels of biological sampling intensity and considers the implications of state noncompliance.

The Board will meet in early November to review public comment on the Draft Addendum and consider its final approval. The addendum process provides the states the opportunity to conduct hearings on the proposed actions; please visit the Commission's website at <http://www.asmfc.org/meetings.htm> for information on any scheduled hearings.

Copies of the Draft Addendum can be obtained via the Commission's website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. Public comment should be forwarded to Braddock Spear, Weakfish Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 1444 'Eye' Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202)289-6051 (fax) or [comments@asmfc.org](mailto:comments@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Weakfish). For more information, please contact Braddock Spear at (202)289-6400 or [bspear@asmfc.org](mailto:bspear@asmfc.org).

## Draft Addendum I to the Spiny Dogfish FMP Approved for Public Comment

On August 18th, the Commission's Spiny Dogfish Management Board approved Draft Addendum I to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for Spiny Dogfish for public comment and review. The Draft Addendum proposes establishing a multi-year specification setting process for the spiny dogfish fishery for up to five years. Its intent is to streamline the annual specification process for spiny dogfish, thereby, reducing administrative costs while also providing fishermen with the ability to set long-term business plans and goals for their fishery operations.

Under the current management system for spiny dogfish, the specification of commercial quotas and trip limits are conducted every year and apply only to the following fishing year. The Draft Addendum modifies the current FMP to allow for specification of total allowable landings (TALs) for the spiny dogfish fishery in



any given year for up to five years. The three management options under consideration in the Draft Addendum are (1) status quo; (2) allow for multi-year management measures without annual review (Commission preferred option); and (3) allow for multi-year management with annual review. Implementation of Addendum 1 would provide the option, not the requirement, for the Commission to specify multi-year management measures. The Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils have already taken similar action under Framework 1, recommending the adoption of multi-year management measures without annual review to NOAA Fisheries for final approval.

In other action, the Board approved initiating the development of a coastal shark fishery management plan to complement current federal actions on coastal sharks.

The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries will be conducting a hearing on the Draft Addendum on September 19, 2005 at 7:00 PM. It will be held at the Holiday Inn, 55 Ariadne Road, Dedham, Massachusetts.

Copies of the Draft Addendum can be obtained via the Commission's website at [www.asmf.org](http://www.asmf.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. Public comment will be accepted until **5 PM on September 26, 2005** and should be forwarded to Ruth Christiansen, Spiny Dogfish Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 1444 'Eye' Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-6051 (fax) or [comments@asmfc.org](mailto:comments@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Spiny Dogfish). For more information, please contact Ruth Christiansen at (202) 289-6400 or [rchristiansen@asmfc.org](mailto:rchristiansen@asmfc.org).

## ASMFC Releases Draft Addendum VII to the American Lobster Plan for Public Comment

On August 17th, the Commission's American Lobster Management Board approved Draft Addendum VII to Amendment 3 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Lobster for public review and comment. The Draft Addendum proposes the establishment of a multi-jurisdictional effort control program for Lobster Conservation Management Area 2 (state and federal waters off of Massachusetts and Rhode Island). The Draft Addendum proposes capping effort (traps fished) at or near recent levels and allows adjustments in trap levels based on future stock conditions.

In 2003, based on concerns regarding stock decline in Area 2, the Lobster Board took emergency action to accelerate gauge size increases for that area and initiate the development of an effort control program. Addendum IV, adopted in December 2003, established the first Area 2 effort control plan. However, this plan was not implemented due to the inability of several jurisdictions to execute portions of the plan. The proposed effort control plan contained in Draft Addendum VII intends to replace the prior plan. It proposes capping the number of traps at recent levels, thereby, capturing the attrition from the fishery caused by stock decline and preventing a return of overall fishing levels to the historic highs of the late 1990s. Draft Addendum VII is the product of the collective efforts of the Area 2 LCMT fishermen and all jurisdictions with Area 2 permit holders (Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey).

Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut have scheduled the dates and times of their public hearings; the details follow.

### Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries

*October 3, 2005; 6:30 – 10:00 PM*

New Bedford Days Inn

500 Hathaway Road

New Bedford, Massachusetts

Contact: Dan McKiernan (617) 626-1536

*continued on page 8*

# ASMFC & MAFMC Approve 2006 TALs for Bluefish, Scup and Black Sea Bass

On August 8 & 9, the Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council (Council) met to finalize the total allowable landings (TAL) limits for bluefish, scup and black sea bass, and establish 2006 commercial management measures for the respective fisheries. The TALs are provided below in millions of pounds.

Species	2004 TAL	2005 TAL	2006 TAL
Bluefish	31.9	30.8	24.8
Black Sea Bass	8.0	8.2	8.0
Scup	16.5	16.5	16.27

The 2006 black sea bass quota decreased slightly from 8.2 million pounds in 2005 to 8.0 million pounds, due to a decrease in the survey index used to evaluate the stock. The Commission and Council approved increases in the minimum sizes for circular vents (now set at 2.5" in diameter) and the number of vents in traps and pots. All traps and pots will be required to have at least two vents in the parlor portion of the trap to help increase escapement of sub-le-

gal fish. These changes must be implemented by January 1, 2007.

For scup, the Commission and Council approved a TAL of 16.27 million pounds. Both groups also approved changes to the commercial possession limits for the scup winter II period (November 1 – December 31). Winter II

trip limits will increase to 2000 pounds, with an increase of 1500 pounds for every 500,000 pounds of scup transferred from the winter I period (January 1 – April 30) to the winter II period.

While the 2005 bluefish assessment was reviewed and approved by the Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Review Committee, concerns regarding the adequacy of the data led the Commission and the Council to reduce the overall TAL to 24.8 million pounds for blue-

fish. They set the commercial quota at 9.5 million pounds and the recreational harvest limit at 15.3 million pounds. Further, both groups directed the Bluefish Technical Monitoring Committee to continue working on improving and refining the bluefish stock assessment. The Commission and Council determined the current regulations are sufficient to ensure the new TAL will not be exceeded.

The Commission de-

ferred taking action on the 2006 summer flounder TAL and management measures until its Annual Meeting in late October/early November. The Commission's actions with regards to black sea bass, scup and bluefish are final and apply in state waters. The Council will be forwarding its recommendations to NOAA Fisheries for final approval. For more information, please contact Julie Nygard, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or [jnygard@asmfc.org](mailto:jnygard@asmfc.org).

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## Draft Addendum VII to the American Lobster Plan Available for Public Comment (continued from page 7)

### Rhode Island Dept. of Environmental Management

*September 28, 2005; 6:00 PM*

University of Rhode Island  
Narragansett Bay Campus  
Corless Auditorium  
South Ferry Road  
Narragansett, Rhode Island  
Contact: Tom Angell (401) 423-1925

### Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection

*October 5, 2005; 7:00 PM*

Marine Headquarters  
333 Ferry Road  
Old Lyme, Connecticut  
Contact: Mark Alexander (860) 434-6043

The Board will meet in early November to review public comment on the Draft Addendum and consider its final approval. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on the Draft Addendum either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies of the Draft Addendum can be obtained via the Commission's website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. Public comment will be accepted until 5 PM on October 12, 2005 and should be forwarded to Toni Kerns, American Lobster Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 1444 'Eye' Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202)289-6051 (fax) or [comments@asmfc.org](mailto:comments@asmfc.org) (Subject line: lobster). For more information, please contact Toni Kerns at (202)289-6400 or [tkerns@asmfc.org](mailto:tkerns@asmfc.org).



## ASMFC Approves Addendum XVII to the Summer Flounder FMP

On August 16th, the Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board approved Addendum XVII to the Summer Flounder Fishery Management Plan. The Addendum provides the states the option to voluntarily form multi-state regions for the management of their recreational summer flounder fisheries. This action was taken to address concerns raised by fishermen and managers on the adequacy of using recreational data to set state-specific regulations, as well as problems that have arisen when neighboring states apply differing regulations on shared water bodies.

The Addendum will enable a group of adjacent states to pool their recre-

ational data to determine a single possession limit, size limit and season. The management measures within the region would be the same for each state in the region and conservation equivalency would not be permitted. The Addendum also allows states to average multiple years of data to determine the impacts of proposed recreational management programs, including minimum fish size, possession limit and season. For example, averaging of data may help states to more accurately estimate expected catch when liberalizing their regulations in response to a harvest underage. Averaging of data to determine the recreational harvest targets will not be allowed.



Copies of the Addendum can be obtained via the Commission's website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. For more information, please contact Toni Kerns, Fisheries Management Plan Coordinator, at (202) 289-6400 or [tkerns@asmfc.org](mailto:tkerns@asmfc.org).

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## NOAA Fisheries to Host Special Session on Large Marine Ecosystem-based Fisheries Management

A special session entitled "Challenges to and Prospects for Large Marine Ecosystem-based Fisheries Management" is being convened by Dr. Kenneth Sherman (Director, NOAA Fisheries Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Narragansett Laboratory) and Margaret McBride (NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office) during a two-day Chesapeake Bay Colloquium at the 18th International Conference of the Estuarine Research Federation in Norfolk, Virginia (October 16-21, 2005). Of particular interest is a joint presentation on "Lessons Learned from the Restored Atlantic Coastal Striped Bass Population" that will be given by Robert Beal (Director, ASMFC Interstate Fisheries Management Program) and Jim Uphoff (Project Leader, Habitat Assessment, Maryland Department of Natural Resources).

Ecosystem-based management of fisheries for bay-dependent coastal species that cross state jurisdictions must include coordinated actions by agencies charged with the management of both fisheries and fish habitat. It must also address national ecosystem-based management goals and objectives. Using the Northeast Continental Shelf Large Marine Ecosystem (LME) as the relevant management unit for effective implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Fisheries Ecosystem Planning document [http://noaa.chesapeakebay.net/Fish/FEP\\_DRAFT.pdf](http://noaa.chesapeakebay.net/Fish/FEP_DRAFT.pdf), this special session will further the national goal of an ecosystem approach to management of natural resources. Registration for the Chesapeake Bay Colloquium is available at the ERF web site, <http://www.erf.org/>, along with more details on the Conference. For additional information, visit <http://noaa.chesapeakebay.net> or contact Margaret McBride at [Margaret.McBride@noaa.gov](mailto:Margaret.McBride@noaa.gov) or (410) 267-5674.

### Mark Your Calendars!

### ASMFC 2006 Meeting Dates

February 13-16

May 8-11

August 14-17

DoubleTree Hotel Crystal City  
300 Army Navy Drive  
Arlington, VA 22202  
703/416-4100

October 22-26

ASMFC 65th Annual Meeting  
Sheraton Atlantic Beach  
Oceanfront Hotel  
Atlantic Beach, North Carolina

# ASMFC Releases Draft Amendment I to the Atlantic Croaker Plan for Public Comment

On August 17th, the Commission's South Atlantic State/Federal Fisheries Management Board approved Amendment 1 to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for Atlantic Croaker for public review and comment. New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission have scheduled the dates and times of their public hearings; the details of those hearings follow. The details of the scheduled hearings follow.

## New Jersey Fish and Wildlife

*October 13, 2005; 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM*

Ocean County Administration Building

101 Hooper Avenue, Room 119

Toms River, New Jersey

Contact: Bruce Freeman at (609) 633-2408

## Maryland Department of Natural Resources

*September 26, 2005; 6:30 PM*

Tawes State Office Building

C-1 Conference Room

580 Taylor Avenue

Annapolis, Maryland

Contact: Howard King at (410) 260-8281

## Potomac River Fisheries Commission

*October 5, 2005; 6:30 PM*

222 Taylor Street

John T. Parran Hearing Room

Colonial Beach, Virginia

Contact: AC Carpenter at

(804) 224-7148

## Virginia Marine Resources Commission

*September 28, 2005; 6:00 PM*

2600 Washington Avenue

Third Floor

Newport News, Virginia

Contact: Jack Travelstead at (757) 247-2247



Photo courtesy of Virginia Marine Resources Commission

## North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries

*September 29, 2005; 6:00 PM*

North Carolina Aquarium on Roanoke Island

374 Airport Road

Manteo, North Carolina

Contact Louis Daniel at (252) 726-7021

Draft Amendment 1 incorporates information from the 2004 peer-reviewed stock assessment as well as the required provisions of the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act. It proposes the establishment of biological reference points (i.e., biomass and fishing mortality targets and thresholds) to manage the croaker resource and includes options to control fishing mortality regionally or on a coastwide basis. The Draft Amendment also identifies research priorities to bolster future stock assessments and encourages the states and the federal government to continue ongoing juvenile and adult surveys for data collection purposes.

The Board will meet in early November to review public comment on the Draft Amendment and consider its final approval. Fishermen and other interested groups are encouraged to provide input on Draft Amendment 1 either by attending public hearings or providing written comments. Copies of the Draft Amendment can be obtained via the Commission's website at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) under Breaking News or by contacting the Commission at (202) 289-6400. Public comment will be accepted until 5 PM on Friday October 21, 2005 and should be forwarded to Nancy Wallace, Atlantic Croaker Fishery Management Plan Coordinator, at 1444 'Eye' Street, NW, Sixth Floor, Washington, DC 20005; (202) 289-6051 (fax) or [comments@asmfc.org](mailto:comments@asmfc.org) (Subject line: Atlantic croaker). For more information, please contact Nancy Wallace at (202) 289-6400 or [nwallace@asmfc.org](mailto:nwallace@asmfc.org).





## ACCSP Evaluates its Successes and Needs for the Coming Years

### Coordinating Council Reviewed 10-Year Progress of the Program

The Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program (ACCSP), a partnership of 23 state and federal resource management agencies, is currently preparing for an external peer review and new strategic plan in 2006.

To prepare for the new strategic plan, the ACCSP Coordinating Council, which serves as the governing body of the program, met on August 15, 2005 for a facilitated session to discuss how the Program had succeeded in meeting its goals and to determine how the goals may need to change in coming years. Among the successes they identified were:

- Complete, coastwide standards for fishery-dependent data, including standard definitions of data elements for all fishing sectors,
- Filled data gaps in the Southeast,

- New seed funding to get programs initiated in some states,
- Established infrastructure for addressing statistics priorities,
- Eliminating duplicative data collection in some areas,
- More timely availability of some types of data for management use, and
- Web access to the data warehouse.

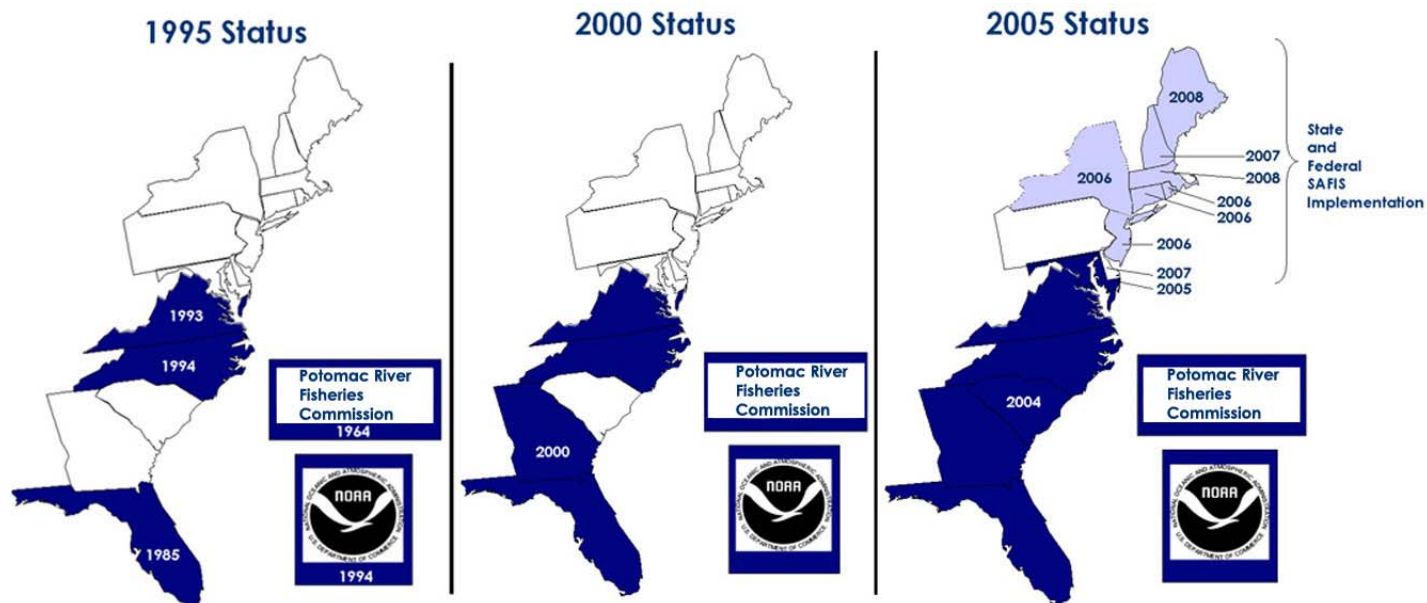
Based on the mission, vision, and goals of the ACCSP as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2002-2006, the Coordinating Council also discussed ways in which the Program had fallen short. Some of those items included

- A lack of diadromous species data,
- Despite improvements in recreational fisheries data, decreasing confidence in those data among fishing constituents,

- Lacking participation among some partners,
- Insufficient data for stock assessment, and
- Lack of biological sampling and bycatch sampling data.

Some Council members expressed concern that many of the expectations placed on the ACCSP, although reflective of its goals, were unrealistic given the Program's stagnant funding and the readiness of many of the partners to implement data collection standards.

ACCSP staff is compiling a report based on the discussions from the Council's August meeting that will be available in September. The report will be used to guide the external reviewers next spring. For more information, visit [www.accsp.org](http://www.accsp.org).



Partners shown in dark blue have implemented the ACCSP's data collection standards for commercial fisheries. Those in light blue are currently implementing the standards and using SAFIS, the ACCSP's web-based data entry application. The corresponding years indicate when partners completed or expect to complete implementation. Partners primarily devoted the first five years to setting standards. The second five years show a dramatic increase in partners implementing those standards.

**ASMFC Technical Committee  
Meeting Week**

**September 26 - 30, 2005**

**Radisson Old Town Alexandria  
901 North Fairfax Street  
Alexandria, Virginia**

**Atlantic Croaker Technical Committee**

Monday, September 26 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

**Multi-Species VPA Committee**

Monday, September 26 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM

**Stock Assessment Committee**

Tuesday, September 27 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Wednesday, September 28 8:30 AM – 1:00 PM

**Atlantic Sturgeon Technical Committee**

Tuesday, September 27 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Wednesday, September 28 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM

**Striped Bass Technical Committee**

Thursday, September 29 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Friday, September 30 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
1444 Eye Street, N.W., 6th Floor  
Washington D.C. 20005

*Return Service Requested*